WITCHCRAFT

AND

QUAKERISM

BY

AMELIA MOTT GUMMERE

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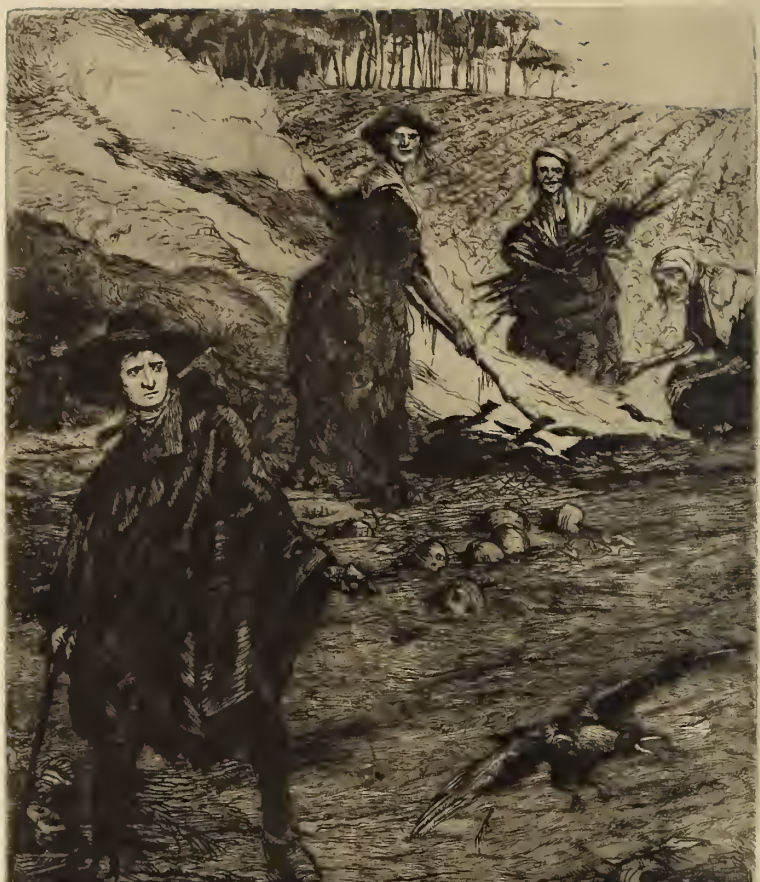
Witchcraft *and* Quakerism



As I was going to a meeting, I saw some *Women* in a *Field*, and I discerned them to be *Witches* and I was moved to go out of my way into the Field to them and declare unto them their Conditions: telling them plainly, *They were in the Spirit of Witchcraft.*

George Fox *his Journal.*

P.Spence

GEORGE FOX AND THE WITCHES
After the etching by Robert Spence, owner of the original manuscript Journal of George Fox, and by courtesy of the Artist.

WITCHCRAFT *and* QUAKERISM

A STUDY IN SOCIAL HISTORY

By AMELIA MOTT GUMMERE

Author of
"The Quaker: A Study in Costume."

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PREFACE.

It is a curious fact of history that periods occur in which the human race returns to some phase of thought long since supposed to be outgrown. The present extraordinary reappearance of belief in superstitions, mystic rites and occult phenomena of a more or less scientific or dignified character, may well bid us halt and philosophize for a moment on the origin of such beliefs.

In this connection, the attitude of the Quakers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries toward the whole subject of superstitious belief is extremely interesting, and shows the Rationalist at his best.

If the following pages serve to call attention to the sanity of an entire community on a subject upon which most people had fallen in with current thought to a dangerous degree, the purpose of the writer will be accomplished.

Haverford, 1908. A. M. G.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

I.

Superstition in England and America in the Seventeenth Century .....page 5

II.

The Camisards—George Fox and Witchcraft..page 15

III.

Anti-Quaker Publications in connection with Witchcraft .....page 27

IV.

State and Quaker Laws against Witchcraft and Sorcery .....page 36

V.

Minutes of Pennsylvania Meetings against Witchcraft .....page 48

VI.

Whittier's Attitude toward the Subject—Dreams and Visions .....page 62

WITCHCRAFT AND QUAKERISM.

I.

"There in a gloomy hollow Glen she found
A little cottage built of Sticks and Reeds
In homely wise and walled with Sods around
In which a Witch did dwell, in loathly Weedes,
And wilful Want, all careless of her Needes
So choosing Solitarie to abide,
Far from all Neighbours, that her devilish Deedes
And hellish Arts from People she might hide
And hurt far off unknown, whom ever she enviede."

Spenser: *Faerie Queen.*

N many respects the Quakers stand out conspicuously free from some of the current phases of thought prevalent at the time of their rise. Among these may be mentioned the belief in witchcraft, which was as common in the seventeenth century as is ours to-day in medicine or electricity. Moreover, the

English people were in a period of great spiritual turmoil, and were keyed up to a state of nervous irritability which responded to the first summons. Such conditions are familiar to all students of history.

Periods of religious excitement followed the preaching of the Franciscan Friars in Italy, that of Luther in Germany, and of John Cotton and the Mathers in New England. The Quakers themselves, under certain conditions, were not free from a similar tendency, while a more aggravated form was found among the disciples of John Wesley. The phenomenon is not unfamiliar to-day in rural neighborhoods. The great mass of the yeoman and middle class from which the Quakers chiefly came, possessed a social atmosphere of haziness and uncertainty, lent by their limited relations to the world at large. Many of the men whose names are familiar to us in the early history of Quakerism were either by education or social position, or from other causes, superior to the class of people who constituted the main body of Fox's followers. With these latter, critical ignorance often made a medium, vague and distorted, through which, to the Quaker mystic, men were as trees walking. It was a time when many lived upon the border-land of insanity. If it was possible for an intelligent

and highly educated man like John Evelyn to see in the passage of a comet across the heavens something terrifying and portentous, it is little wonder that the uneducated of his day spent their lives in superstition. There was neither political nor religious peace, and education was not a common blessing. Miracles were declared perfectly possible. The Baptists were healing by anointing with oil, and the King was "touching" for scrofula, or "King's Evil."

Moreover, the Bible was so new that the splendid imagery of the Hebrew prophets and the fearful pictures of the Apocalypse wrought men's minds to a superhuman pitch, wherein any extraordinary happening might be accepted as possible. All the extravagance of which some of the early Quakers were undoubtedly guilty, although officially discountenanced by the sect, were, as with the Puritans, the result of an over-literal interpretation of their Bibles; for, despite the Quaker claim to the superiority of the spirit to the word, as contained in Scripture, the Quakers to a man were thoroughly versed in Bible phraseology. So also were the Puritans. Winthrop's supreme veneration for the Bible was a part of his reverent belief, not, certainly, any natural desire to seek vengeance. How many modern Quakers, indeed, realize that

at the time George Fox was born, in 1624, King James' version of the English Bible had been in the hands of the common people but *thirteen years?* During the height of the religious excitement among the sectaries of the Commonwealth, no hallucination was too far-fetched to be believed, or to be explained upon religious grounds alone.

Such a man as Blackstone wrote: "To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence, of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once to flatly deny the revealed word of God."

Sir Matthew Hale, in 1665, charging the jury in a famous witch trial at Bury St. Edmunds, said: "That there are such creatures as witches, I make no doubt at all, for first, the Scriptures have affirmed so much; secondly, the wisdom of all nations hath provided laws against such persons." The verdict was "guilty," and the witch executed.[1]

Every mischance was spoken of by the Puritans as a "judgment of God"; so and so "was a professed enemy to us, but he never prospered," says Winthrop; and the same note is sounded in the journal of George Fox. A son of Samuel Shattuck, bearer of the King's mandate of release for the Quakers imprisoned by Governor Endicott, appears in the Salem trials (case of Bishop) as a prominent

[1]Campbell. "Lives of the Chief Justices." I, 565.

witness against some of the unfortunates accused of witchcraft soon after. Years later, when all this with its results had passed into history, John Wesley bemoaned the decline of superstition, the advance of human thought and the more peaceable reign of Christ on the earth, in the following words: "It is true likewise, that the English in general, and, indeed, most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere wives' fables. I am sorry for it. * * * * * *The giving up of witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible!*"[1] It is comforting to know that his brother Charles kept a clearer judgment on this subject, upon which they were never agreed. The more enlightened periods have been the most active in persecuting for witchcraft, and the Reformers were the strongest of the believers. Luther himself wrote: "I should have no compassion on these witches. I would burn all of them. * * Witchcraft is the Devil's own proper work." He, therefore, threw after him his famous ink-bottle! King Henry VIII seems to have been the only person in all the long list proof against such delusions. Oxford heads of colleges sought out heretics with the aid of astrology, and

[1]Journal of John Wesley, 1768.

many persons permanently or temporarily went mad.

A little later, Sir Thomas Browne's well-known words express the public sentiment: "I have long believed and do now know, that there are witches; they that doubt them do not only deny them, but spirits, and are obliquely and upon consequence, a sort, not of infidels, but of atheists."[1] Richard Baxter sustained Cotton Mather in his arguments in favor of the existence of witches in a treatise "On the Certainty of a World of Spirits"; and in America the height was reached in 1693.

A year or two before, the Puritans at Salem had turned upon their own people the persecutions they had inflicted upon the Quakers; and even the excesses of those Quakers whose religious excitement had led them over the borders of sanity, do not furnish a parallel to those of the Salem people themselves. But a clear line of demarcation must be drawn between the Puritans of Salem and all others. In the Old Colony there were but two cases tried, witnesses cross-examined, the testimony scanned and charges found "not proved." In this respect they are nearly as clear as Pennsylvania, and the deeds of Salem must not be charged to the entire community. In 1669 there was much

[1]Religio Medici. Ed. 1672. p. 24.

tendency to suicide in the neighborhood, due to the hardness of the Calvinistic doctrine, preceding the Salem outburst. It is not true, as has been recently asserted, that suicide is an evidence of culture. The Dutch in Manhattan were free from witchcraft persecutions when the Quakers first went there, and the sensible Hollanders laughed at the credulity. This was also the attitude of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. The blight of 1665 that extinguished all hope of wealth from the growth of wheat in Massachusetts, was attributed by the common people, not to witchcraft, but to the vengeance of God for the execution of the Quaker martyrs. These Quakers, however, were victims of Boston, not Plymouth, and the accusations of witchcraft were made by the inhabitants of the former town.

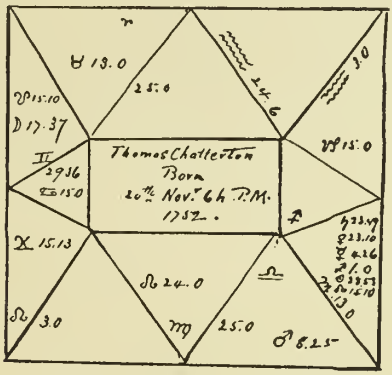
It was impossible in a community of the intelligence of New England for any witchcraft creed long to survive. Many more persons were executed in a single county in England than was the case in the whole of America. English laws influenced all the executions in New England, where broader and generally superior standards of living, and the application of higher moral aims, made such lapses as that of the witchcraft persecutions in Salem the more conspicuous. Professor G. L.

Kittredge, in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society (Vol. XVIII), ably and successfully defends the Puritan forefathers at Salem for sharing in the errors of their time, proving that their exceptional quality lay in the virtue of a prompt acknowledgment by judge and jury of their mistaken course, rather than in the crime of condemning twenty-eight persons to death for a cause, which, in England and on the continent of Europe, was responsible for the death of thousands.[1]

Mr. Lecky tells us that the most free from the spirit of persecution on this question at all times has been the Anglican Church. Continental Catholicism and English Puritanism wielded so much more power than what is now the Established Church, that it may have simply lacked the opportunity to manifest its sentiments. However this may be, there is a striking contrast in the moderation of the higher clergy upon this point, although exceptions may be found. All the vast field of art also shows the prevalence of superstitious beliefs, as in the ghastly pictures of the Dance of Death. The study of alchemy, the horoscope, and earlier forms of what later developed into scientific research, show the first instances of men devoting

[1]In the original "Old South" Church, Boston, Judge Sewall made public confession and repentance for the part he had taken in the Salem Witchcraft Trials.

themselves voluntarily to the Devil. The multiplying glass, the concave mirror and the camera obscura, were new in the seventeenth century; and as the law against witchcraft remained in force, exhibitors of these curiosities were in some danger of sentence to Bridewell, the pillory or even the

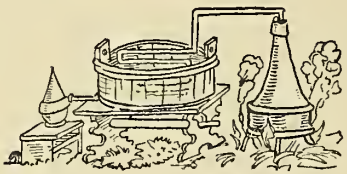


THOMAS CHATTERTON'S HOROSCOPE

halter. Modern science demands of its votaries a humble mind. No scientist has ever pronounced the final word as did those old astrologers and alchemists, who, to their admirers, were a sort of demigods or seers. *Mammon*, in "The Alchemist," is made by Ben Jonson to say:

"For which I'll say unto my cook, 'There's gold;—
Go forth and be a knight.'"

The higher critics, however, had appeared. So long before as 1392, one Walter Brute had declared Popish exorcisms absurd; in 1577, John Weir, physician to the Duke of Cleves, challenged the existence of witches, and declared the accused unbalanced in mind and deserving of pity; in 1585, Reginald Scott wrote his "Discoverie of Witchcraft," in reply to which the "Dæmonologie" of King James was written in 1597. But Scott was a century in advance of his age, and his book was publicly burned. Finally, Bekker, in his "Bewitched World," gave the death-blow to the superstition.



II.

T the period when the Quakers arose, alchemy and its allied arts were falling into the hands of quacks and mountebanks; and witchcraft, which held its own much later, was not nearly so conspicuous as it had been, although it was still sufficiently prevalent. Selden, who had little or no belief in witchcraft himself, said, in justification of some harsh proceedings against alleged witches, "that if a man thought that by turning his hat round and saying *'boz'* he could kill a man, he ought to be put to death for making the attempt." So also Dryden: "Though he cannot strike a blow to hurt any, yet he ought to be punished for the malice of the action, as our witches are justly hanged, because they think themselves to be such, and suffer deservedly for believing they did mischief, because they meant it."[1]

[1]Essay on Dramatic Poetry.

The first penal statute against witchcraft was enacted in 1541, when Cranmer enjoined the clergy "to seek for any that use charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or any like craft invented by the Devil." Under King James, Parliament made witchcraft punishable by death. The last judicial condemnation for witchcraft in England was in 1712, in Hertfordshire, when a woman was sentenced to death for selling her soul to the Devil. A royal pardon saved her. The capital sentence against witchcraft was only abolished by George II, in 1736.[1] In those seventeenth century days, it was necessary to believe in witches to be considered orthodox. The man who did not to a certain extent believe in witchcraft, was looked upon very much as the more advanced advocates of scientific, or the "higher" criticism, are now regarded by the old-line conservatives.

In 1707, the Camisards, or Cevennois, who came over to England in that year, were supposed to be prophets and work miracles. They were first stirred up by Cavalier. These people were subject to epileptiform disorders. They were supposed to be inspired, had great vogue, were dispersed from France, and some of them came to

[1]Act 9, Cap. 5, Geo. II. Ashton, "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne." Vol. I, p. 122.

England. They were commonly known as "The French Prophets." They chiefly preached the approach of the millennium. Sir Isaac Newton himself had a strong attraction to go and hear these "prophets," and was with difficulty restrained by his friends, who feared that he might be affected by them as Fatio, the mathematician, had been.[1] The famous George Keith, who was disowned for heresy by the Quakers, published, in 1707, a pamphlet with the following title: "The Magic of Quakerism; or the Chief Mysteries of Quakerism Laid Open. To which are added a preface and postscript relating to the Camisards, in answer to Mr. Lacy's preface to The Cry from the Desart."[2] In 1708, the Quakers of Westminster Monthly Meeting (Third month 5th) mention in their records the attendance at the Camisards' meetings of one of their own women preachers. "A paper was brought in from one Mary Willis and read, wherein she condemned herself for going and joining with those they call the French Protestants, and suffering the agitation spirit to come upon her. She is advised to forbear imposing her preaching upon our public meetings for worship until Friends are better satisfied."[3]

[1]Spence's "Anecdotes." p. 56.

[2]By "George Keith, M. A., Rector of Edburton, in Sussex."

[3]Beck and Ball. "History of London Friends' Meetings." p. 252.

The tests were very arbitrary as applied to witches. Thoresby (quoted by Ashton) says he went to see a witch who could not repeat the Lord's Prayer—"a fit instrument for Satan!"

An account of the trembling and excitement of some of the Quakers is given in an early tract, "Brief Relation of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers" (London, 1653). The writer adds: "I heartily believe these quakings to be diabolical raptures." In reference to these manifestations of excitement, Barclay says:[1] "The Friends seem to have treated them among themselves very rationally, and occasionally administered a cordial or medicine of some kind, and this is commented upon in the tracts of the times as a circumstance of the utmost mystery and a proof of sorcery!" Of course the Friends naturally quoted as a precedent the facts as given in the Bible—that Moses "quaked," David "roared," and Jeremiah "trembled." The peculiar feature of early Methodist, or rather Wesleyan, excitement, was quaking and trembling.[2] Many manifestations of this sort were given in the Independent churches also, and in one,

[1]R. Barclay. "Inner Life of Religious Societies of Commonwealth." 312.

[2]See Southey's "Life of Wesley," I, chap. VII; and Wesley's Journal, passim.

Mr. Davies, the pastor, was charged by some of his brethren of dealing in "the Black Art!"[1]

John Bunyan and his contemporary, George Fox, were not entirely superior to the superstitions of their age. The bare and narrow lives of the earlier Friends, excepting the few of rank and station, were compensated for in the early days of persecution by a spiritual exaltation that bore them safely over danger-points always open in a system where the graces of society and its intellectual needs are ignored. When the tinker and the cobbler had become the two great preachers of differing creeds, they still kept unquestioned their belief in the existence of occult powers, although they, with most educated people, held to it with less earnestness than before. Fox has always been represented by his followers with too little of the human side, while his critics have treated him unfairly, from the beginning. His own journal, which is the authority for every statement here made, has never been given to the public unabridged and complete, with all its innocent errors upon its head.[2] Fox's character has nothing to lose in the open glare of sharpest criticism. The human touch

[1]Hist. Independent Church at Rothwell. By N. Glass. pp. 85-87.

[2]Since the above was written, notice has been received of the forthcoming authorized edition of Fox's Journal, unabridged and annotated.

which our picture of him lacks is given by the knowledge of his few frailties, not one of them to his discredit.

After visiting Brigham, in 1653, when his preaching so affected the people at "John Wilkinson's steeple-house," he tells us in his journal, "As I was sitting in an house full of people, declaring the word of life unto them, I cast my eye upon a woman and discovered an evil spirit in her. I was moved of the Lord to speak sharply unto her, and told her she was under the influence of an unclean spirit, whereupon the woman went out of the room. I, being a stranger there, and knowing nothing of the woman outwardly, the people wondered and told me afterward I had discovered a great thing, for all the country looked upon her to be a wicked person. The Lord had given me a spirit of discerning, by which I many times saw the states and conditions of people, and would try their spirits. Not long before, as I was going to a meeting, I saw some women in a field, and I discerned them to be Witches and I was moved to go out of my way into the Field to them and declare unto them their Conditions: telling them plainly, They were in the Spirit of Witchcraft.[1]

[1]The editing of the Journal has modified Fox's own statement, in every published edition. The quotation is from the original manuscript. A remarkable etching has recently been done by Robert Spence, an English artist, representing this scene with

"Another time there came one into Swarthmoor Hall in the meeting time, and I was moved to speak sharply to her, and told her she was under the power of an evil spirit, and the people said afterward she was generally accounted so to be." "There came also another time a woman and stood at a distance from me. I cast mine eye upon her and said, 'Thou hast been an harlot,' for I saw perfectly the condition and life of the woman. She answered, many could tell her of her outward sins, but none could tell her of her inward. I told her, 'Her heart was not right before the Lord, and that from the inward came the outward.' This woman was afterward convinced of God's truth and became a Friend."

The remarkable occurrence at Lichfield two years previous is an example of the heights of enthusiasm to which Fox's religious fervor occasionally rose. Barefooted and bareheaded, travel-stained and weary, Fox, under the deepest spiritual sense of duty, passed through the streets of Lichfield, crying loudly, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!" The incident as related by him is too long for insertion here, but is very striking. He had just been released from Derby jail, in a condition

the "witches" in the field. See frontispiece. Mr. Spence owns the original MS. Journal.

of exhaustion and nervous strain, and Professor James puts upon pathological grounds the state of trance or nervous exaltation in which Fox trod the streets of the town. Fox's own rather far-fetched explanation is not adequate; he says it was because "that in the Emperor Diocletian's time, a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield." It was required of him to "raise a memorial of the blood of those martyrs, which had been shed a thousand years before and lay cold in the streets." Faulty chronology leaves the explanation of Fox without historical basis, which, however, makes none the less sincere our sympathy for his religious convictions. No doubt Fox's mind, after this performance, was clear, and his satisfaction upon the subject unclouded. It is to be interpreted simply as an act of obedience to an apprehended duty, and as such, is easily understood. There are many such instances; that good judgment did not accompany the act makes it none the less sincere. It is quite possible, also, as a recent writer has pointed out, that Fox had a sub-conscious recollection of the burning of one Wightman, an early Dissenter, at Lichfield, an event which took place not forty years before, and to which the minds of the inhabitants must have at once reverted, even if Fox himself

may not have recalled the fact of the incident clearly.[1]

The founder of Quakerism was a social-religious reformer. His mysticism, while a very real thing, was but a small part of his life, whose object was to teach his fellowmen the proper channels into which to direct their human activities. He employed his eight periods of imprisonment, not in the ecstatic contemplation and meditation of the true mystic, but in writing most plain and practical common-sense letters to his people, to the Court and Parliament, and to the English nation at large, as well as in planning out further mission campaigns for himself and his companions.

[1] "Two or three years ago there was found, in the State Paper office [at London], a series of documents relating to one John Trendall, a mason, who, in 1639, was imprisoned for holding religious meetings apart from the Episcopal Church. * * A proposal was made in all seriousness that he should be burned at the stake! * * The Lords of the Council wrote to Neile, Archbishop of York, asking as to how he had brought about the burning of one Wightman, twenty-seven years previously." The Archbishop stated that the execution had taken place in 1612, at Lichfield, during his own bishopric over that see, and that he had had the assistance of Laud, then Archbishop of Canterbury. Neile urged the good done by this burning, and that of Legate in the same year, the last occurrences of the kind in England. [See Transactions of Congregational Society for July, 1902; also an article by A. Neave Brayshaw, "The Burning of Non-conformists," in *British Friend* for January, 1903.]

Professor Royce has told us that Fox was subject to nervous attacks which were due to sympathetic conditions. They were often brought about by malnutrition, and it was of one of these that he fell ill in 1664, at the age of forty, when "burdened with the world's spirit," *i.e.,* Quaker persecution, during which attack he temporarily lost both sight and hearing. The "openings" of Fox —who, with all other religious people of his time, took his Bible as a literal guide and test of piety— were given him by that inner vision in which spiritual conditions are felt, not seen; and it is only to such clear, and at the same time, sympathetic minds as that of Fox that these do not prove dangerous. Fox was full of strength, of fearless energy, of nervous power, which translated themselves at once into the widest activities. His whole life was objective. But many of the temperaments to which his preaching made its appeal, under the resulting nervous excitement, dropped into subjective self-analysis; and, without the impulse, the ability or the spiritual poise of their leader, they fell into the conditions, which, in the early days of unsettlement, sent certain erratic converts of Fox aimlessly wandering about the country; it is these who brought upon Quakerism its first reproach. The enthusiasm of Fox, tinged with the

fervor of religious conviction that struck so deeply into the English people during the Commonwealth, partook more of the spirit of the prophet Isaiah than that of any preacher since his day.

But Fox did not rally his people to any credulity. Although he speaks soberly of the existence of spirits, he is often ready to ridicule the superstitions of the people. When he was taken prisoner in 1659 under a warrant from Major Porter, then Mayor of Ulverstone, fifteen men sat up all night to watch him; "some of them," he says, "sat in the chimney, for fear I should escape up the chimney, such dark imaginations possessed them!" Again he comes out in a fine bit of eloquence, in which clearly enough the ringing Quaker "testimony" against superstition is heard. "The prisoners and some wild people * * * * talked of spirits that haunted Devonsdale, and how many had died in it. But I told them that if all the devils in hell were there, I was over them in the power of God, and found no such thing, for Christ our Priest would sanctify the walls and the house to us, He who bruised the head of the Devil." In the early Quaker days, the reality of witchcraft had never been called in question. Fancy, then, how radical must have seemed Fox's paper addressed, "To Seafaring Men," dated Swarthmoor Hall, the 28th of

Eighth month, 1676. Referring to the power of witches in the minds of sailors, to create storms and breed cyclones, he says, "And let New England professors (of religion) see whether or no they have not sometimes cast some poor simple people into the sea on pretence of being witches." * *

* "For you may see that it was the Lord who sent out the wind and raised the mighty storm in the sea, and not your witches, or ill-tongued people, as you vainly imagine."

Witch of Endor.
After Schnorr von Carolsfeld.

III.

THE Quakers were so remarkably free from popular superstitions, that we are not surprised to find this one more instance in which the world had to have its fling at them. There are cases of individuals among them who entered into superstitious practices, and those cited are from the records. But as a body, the Society at once discountenanced everything of the sort. In 1667, Southwark Monthly Meeting (London) records, "Richard and Ann Cookbree has denied meetings; he is given to study astrologie, and is run into imaginations." The next year, "Sara Pratt has spoken flightily of Friends and Truth * * * * and has taken part in a superstitious burying.[1]

Elizabeth Pennitt, servant to Mary Bannister, a Yorkshire Friend, took out a certificate as a travel-

[1]Beck and Ball. "History London Friends' Meetings." p. 228.

ing minister in 1709. The records of Scarborough Monthly Meeting[1] say that she "ran into ungodly and vain practices, going unto those that pretend to be fortune-tellers, and following their directions and counsell, in order to accomplish what she designed * * * which has been proved to her face." Sixteen men Friends signed her minute of disownment, in September, 1709. Eighteen months later, she sent an acknowledgment from Whitby Preparative Meeting, owning it a "great Evil to ask Counsell of Man or Woman to know what will befall one in this life."

So late as 1728, the same Friends of Southwark Meeting disowned a man "for joining with an alchymist in attempting to transmute metals."[2] The whole neighborhood of Oxford was very superstitious. At Witney, a nearby village, may still be seen a house in which the superstitious householder has driven six *ghost-nails* between the courses of the stones.[3]

An old Minute Book of Hawkshead Meeting, dating from 1699, contains the following entry: "Hawkshead, 1744. There was given for ye supply of 3 poor ffriends within Hawkshead meeting,

[1]Quoted by J. W. Rowntree. "The Rise of Quakerism in Yorkshire."

[2]Beck and Ball. "History London Friends' Meetings." p. 225.

[3]Monk. "History of Oxford." p. 54.

by George Knipe, ye sume of £160, ye will of ye said G. K., with instructions and ful manadgements of sd. afairs by his Trustees. * * * * He gave also a Gold Ring, which is kept in Mary Satterthwaite hand yt any poor ffriends may have it to wash sore eyes with."[1] Possibly this entry shows more ignorance of medicine than any real superstition.

"I have a sty here, Chilax."

Chilax. "I have no gold to cure it, not a penny."[2]

The custom of naming the day and hour of birth arose originally from the necessity to facilitate the calculations of the astrologer in "casting a nativity," or telling the future fortune of a child, should it become necessary. We usually find the Quaker records falling in with the custom, particularly those that are private—in old family Bibles, for instance. The state of the weather is occasionally referred to, but there is never, at least so far as has yet appeared, any evidence of actual belief in astrological prophecy, such as is found in the parish registers of the period. An instance taken from the register of the parish of St. Edmunds, Dudley, shows how necessary many thought it to record all possible data. "1539. Samuell, son of Sir Wil-

[1]William Satterthwaite in *London Friend* for Ninth month, 9th, 1892.

[2]Beaumont and Fletcher. "The Mad Lovers." Act V, Sc. 4.

liam Smith Clarke, Vicar of Duddly, was born on Friday morninge, at 4 of the Clock, being the XXVIIJ day of February, the signe of that day was in the middle of aquaris ♒ ; the signe of the monthe * ; the planet of that day ♀ ; plenet of the same ower ☿ , and the morow day whose name hath continued in Duddly since the Conqueste."[1]

The family Bible of George McMillan, an Irish Quaker who came out to Pennsylvania, records his birth, "In ye yeare of our Lord 1732 The 2d. day of the 4th. Month About (record torn) Noone and 18th. of the *Moons Age.*" Probably this was written in County Antrim, Ireland.[2] The cabalistic signs of the zodiac have always been associated with potato planting. Early tables of alphabets of ancient languages had not appeared before the publication of several editions of Webster's Dictionary, or there would no doubt have been opened new solutions to some of these occult problems!

There is plenty of evidence that the world regarded the early Quakers as in league with the powers of darkness, because of their strange denial of what everybody owned. The British Museum furnishes any number of papers, pamphlets and books written in regard to witchcraft.

[1]T. F. Thistleton-Dyer. "Social Life as Told by the Parish Registers." p. 122.

[2]A. C. Myers. "Irish Quaker Immigrants into Pennsylvania." 401.

What wonder that these gentlemen turned their guns against the Quakers? The year 1655 seems to have been fertile in such literature as the following, holding the Quakers up to ridicule:

1. "The Quakers' Fiery Beacon, or the Shaking Ranter's Ghost" (published for G. Horton.)[1] An extract from this charming volume runs thus: "It is evident in some instances that they are Anti-Magisterical, as well as Anti-Ministerial; yea, that these Quakers use inchanted Bracelets, Potions, Sorcery and Witchcraft to intoxicate their Novices and draw them to their party."

2. "The Quaker's Terrible Vision, or The Devil's Progress to the City of London," &c., &c. For G. Horton, in the great yeare of Quaking, 1655." In this, the Quakers are said to be "an old Love-Lock, cut off from Satan's head."[2]

3. "The Quaker's Dream, or The Devil's Pilgrimage in England. Being an infallible Relation of their several meetings, Shreekings, Shakings, Quakings, Roarings, Yellings, Howlings, Tremblings, * * * * * with a narration of their several Arguments, Tenets, Principles, and Strange Doctrines; The Strange and Wonderful Satanical apparitions and the apearing of the Devil unto them in the likeness of a Black Boar, a Dog with flaming Eyes, and a black man without a head, causing the Dogs to bark, the Swine to cry, and the cattel to run, to the great Admiration of all that shall read the same." 1655.[3]

[1]Brit. Mus. Lib. E. 844/13.
[2]Brit. Mus. Lib. E. 835/10.
[3]Brit. Mus. Lib. E. 833/14.

All the above are illustrated with appropriate wood-cuts; the last has under each picture on the title-page, the inscriptions, "Free-Will," "Walk Answerable," "The Light Within You," "Be Thou Merry," and "Above Ordinances." These, however, lead us into the field of satirical anti-Quaker publications, which needs to be thoroughly explored. The prints that were published at this time, as well as the pamphlets, books and broadsides, form a very necessary part of Quaker history, disagreeable and coarse, like the times, but none the less important, and quite neglected.

A story is told of St. Medard, who, while promenading one fine day on the shore of the Red Sea, saw Satan carrying in a bag a number of sinners. The saint, in compassion for the poor souls, slit open the bag, whereupon the prisoners escaped.

"Away went the Quaker—away went the Baker—
Away went the Friar—that fine fat Ghost,
Whose marrow Old Nick had intended to pick,
Dressed like a woodcock and served on toast!"[1]

A book which had an early vogue on the American side of the Atlantic, and which is interesting and curious, both to the student of history and folk-lore, was a quarto in Latin and German, describing the "Philtres Enthusiasticus, or English

[1]Legend of St. Medard. From *Ingoldsby Legends.*

ANABAPTISTICUM ET ENTHUSIASTICUM

PANTHEON

Und

Geistliches Rüst-Hauß

Wider die

Alten Quacker/

Und

Neuen Frey-Geister/

Welche die Kirche Gottes zeithero verunruhiget/und bestürmet/ auch treue Lehrer und Prediger Göttlichen Worts/ verachtet/ verleumdet/ gelästert und verfolget haben/ und vielen zur Sache dienlichen und nützlichen Kupfern/ bloß zu Gottes Ehre und Erhaltung seiner Christlichen Kirchen/

Auch

Den Geistlichen/ Weltlichen und Hausstande zur Nachricht/ Nutz und besten zusammen getragen und auffgerichtet.

Im Jahr Christi/ 1702.

Title-page of "Pantheon," published in Hamburg in 1702.
From copy in Haverford College Library.

and Dutch Quaker-Powder!"[1] This extraordinary volume sought to prove the use of certain nostrums among the Quakers, in order to propagate their faith. The *Philter* was supposed to be administered to the person whom the Quakers sought to proselytize. Soon a trembling or quaking state was reached, when the conversion was pronounced complete. The author cites several proofs under his affidavit that these were Quaker methods. Such books tickled the popular fancy and had a large circulation. A copy of this, which is believed to be unique, is owned by Dr. J. F. Sachse, of Pennsylvania, and bears the imprint of the University of Rostock.

Another curious old German folio, of 1702, published in Hamburg, is entitled "Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon und Geistliches Lüst-Haus, wider die Alten Quäcker und Neuen Frei-Geister," etc.[2] The volume is full of unfounded aspersions against the Quakers, all the satirical publications against the sect in England seeming to have been taken seriously and translated into Ger-

[1]Its title is "Dissertatio Historico-Theologica de Philtres Enthusiasticus Angelico Batavis," etc. Rostochl, Typis Joh. Wepling I, Seren. Princ. and Acad. Typog.

[2]This great folio is not so rare; copies are owned by Haverford College, Penna.; The Boston Public Library; British Museum, etc.

man. The Quakers are represented as shooting men down in the streets, or breaking faith to the Sovereign; and James Nayler's eccentricities are given as characteristic of the Society. The second part alludes to the Quaker-Powder again, and other enchantments of the sect! Under the heading "Der Quaker und Schwärmer Zauber—Künste," is the following stanza:

"Wer auch der Tauff abschwert, den Teuffel ehrt mit beten,
Die Prediger behezt, mit Satan Unzücht übt,
Wem dieser Zittern macht, wer Quacker-pulver giebt—
Ist der nicht in den bund der Zauberei getreten?"[1]

In this connection, we may notice the curious "Looking Glass for George Fox," in which Ludovic Muggleton, the leader of the "Muggletonians," declares that his sentence of damnation upon the Quakers has caused the cessation of their "witchcraft fits." "I do know and affirm that those speakers of the Quakers and others whom I have passed the sentence of damnation upon, that they have not nor do grow in any experience of Revelation since the Sentence of Damnation was passed upon them." "For the Quakers' Revelation doth arise in them

[1]Whoso abjures baptism; honors the Devil by prayer; worries preachers; commits sin with Satan and is made by his power to tremble; administers Quaker-powders, has he not entered into the covenant of magic arts?

only when the witchcraft fit is upon them, nay, I have known some that have followed the Quakers, desiring to be of them, and earnestly desiring in their meetings to have these fits as other Quakers had." "And the Cause why these Persons aforesaid could have no such Fits, it was because they had talked with me before they fell to the Quakers' principles, so that no Witchcraft-Fit could be produced in them, though their endeavors were great!"

1. The Quaker.
2. The Ranter.
3. The Robinsonian.
4. The Jew.

From the "Pantheon," etc.

IV.

E have seen that Massachusetts, very early in her career, made a witchcraft law; the Plymouth Colony declared against witches in 1636, discriminating, in 1671, with great care against the confusion of *real* cases, with those of the Indian wizards, who remained undisturbed in their rites.[1]

Rhode Island never had a witchcraft trial, although she made the usual tribute to the age by giving the subject place on her statute books. New Hampshire had a few cases of witchcraft; the earliest, in 1656, was that of Jane Welford, who, when brought before the special court of Dover and

[1] "Saint Benedict is reported to have cured a Brother who was possessed of the Devil by thrashing him soundly. It is to be regretted that the Protestantism of the New Englanders prevented their knowing and experimenting with the Saint's specific, which, in all ages of the world, has been admitted to be wonderfully efficacious!"

Portsmouth, was allowed to go on her good behavior. Afterward, 1669, she brought action for damages against her accusers, and received five pounds and costs.[1] Several minor cases came up at the time of the Salem trials, apparently out of sympathy, in neighborhoods bordering on Massachusetts. The law of 1680 prescribed death for any Christian, "so-called," who should be a Witch—"that is, hath, or consulteth with, a familiar Spirit." The law, disallowed in England, was never enforced in New Hampshire, and no witch was ever put to death there.

No witch was ever burned in Virginia. But Grace Sherwood, young and comely, we surmise, won from a relenting justice the order that her condemnation to the ducking-stool was to be "in no wise without her consent, or if the day should be rainy (!) or in any way to endanger her health!"[2]

Quaker Pennsylvania was free from such an act until 1718. In this year, an old English law was revived.[3] "Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that another statute made in the

[1]F. B. Sanborne. "New Hampshire." p. 120.

[2]Mrs. Rogers. "The Mother of Washington and Her Times." p. 43.

[3]This law may be found in Dallas, Vol. I, entitled, "An Act for the Advancement of Justice," etc., and was passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly, 31st May, 1718. Section 11 is quoted.

1st year of the reign of King James I, chap. 12, intitled An Act against Conjuration, witchcraft, and dealing with evil and wicked spirits shall be duly put in execution in this Province and of like force and effect as if the same were repeated and enacted." This long act involved also a return to the severe laws of the old criminal code. It was in no sense a Quaker law. The death of William Penn and the confusion of the struggle on the subject of Affirmation caused the people, in order to secure the favor of the Sovereign, to copy the laws of the mother country, and this was among them. Governor Gookin's insistence on the abandonment of the Colonial law of affirmation threatened Quaker political existence, which, in fact, did not end until 1756. Exemption from oaths was obtained for such as had scruples against them, along with the passage of the above law. There is, however, no record of any trial for witchcraft while this was in force.

The only witchcraft trial in the province of Pennsylvania occurred before the Council, previous to the organization of the Provincial Court, on December 27, 1683.[1] Only one of two old women, both of them Swedes, seems to have been tried.

[1]The record of this trial may be found in Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, Vol. I.

Yeshro Hendrickson's name disappears. Margaret Mattson lived upon her husband's plantation on the Delaware, near Crum Creek, in Ridley township, now Delaware County. She remained for long in local legend, the "Witch of Ridley Creek." At her trial she appeared before William Penn, his Attorney General, a Grand Jury of twenty-one persons, all apparently English, and a Petit Jury of twelve persons, one of whom was a Swede. One Councilman, Lasse Cock, was also a prominent Swede. The case was heard, all the formalities gone through with, and the verdict rendered the same afternoon, as follows: "Guilty of having the Comon Fame of a Witch, but not Guilty in manner and Forme as Shee stands Endicted." There were various accusations of a vague sort against the poor woman, as that she had bewitched calves, geese, cattle and a few persons. Her own daughter testified that she was in league with the Devil. But the sober sanity of the Quaker Jury brought in an eminently safe verdict. Tradition has it that William Penn said to her: "Art thou a witch? Hast thou ridden through the air on a broomstick?" When the poor, confused creature answered, "Yes," he said that she had a perfect right to ride upon a broomstick, that he knew no law whatever against it, and promptly ordered her discharge. This was

the only witchcraft trial ever before the Pennsylvania Courts.

A thorough search of the meeting records among Quakers would probably result in some interesting minutes upon this whole subject. In Pennsylvania, in 1695, it came to the knowledge of Chichester and Concord Monthly Meeting that two young persons of the latter township were engaged in studies and practices regarded as dangerous by the Friends. The matter was treated with great gravity by the meeting. The two were accused of following "Astrology and other arts and sciences, as Geomancy and Chiromancy and Necromancy, etc." It was debated "that the Sence of this meeting is, that the study of these Sciences brings a *Veile upon the understanding and a death upon the life.*" We cannot too strongly note that this was at the very moment when Massachusetts was thrilled with the Salem horrors, and martyrs like Rebecca Nourse, far superior to her cruel judges, had been put to death for vile and flimsy superstitions. The meeting ordered the young men, as well as their father, to be spoken to officially upon the subject. The conference took place:

"Philip Roman and his brother Robert, friends of Chichester, seemed to disown that it mentioned, except the *Astrology*. Much was said to them, but

it was not received. At last they proposed to the meeting, if they thought well of it, to confer with Nicholas Newlin and Jacob Chandler, and if they could convince them that it was evil, they would leave it." The meeting accepted the offer of the young men. At the next meeting (January, 1696), the committee reported that they had conferred with the young men, and there had been "many arguments on both sides—at length, Philip concluded with us that he did not know that he should use that art of Astrology again, for he had denied several that came to him to be resolved of their questions already. Robert promised the same, but with this reserve—unless it was to do some great good with it. From which belief of some great good, we could not remove him." This was not satisfactory to the meeting. Philip was required "to give forth a paper to condemn his practice of resolving questions in Astrology, concerning Loss and Gain, with other vain questions." The meeting gave out a similar paper against Robert.

But this business did not end with the meeting. An offence so serious as the practice of Geomancy could not escape the vigilance of the Grand Jury, particularly as the foreman lived in the same neighborhood with the parties. In bringing the matter to the notice of the Court they say:

"We, the grand Inquest by the King's authority, presents Robert Roman of Chichester for practicing Geomancy according to hidden and divining by a stick. WALTER MARTIN, Foreman."

With the view of effectually eradicating the evil, it became necessary to destroy the implements of mischief by another presentment, which is thus recorded:

"We, the Grand Inquest by the King's authority presents the following books: Hidon's Temple of Wisdom, which teaches Geomancy; and Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft; and Cornelias Agrippa's teaches Secromancy. WALTER MARTIN, Foreman."

Upon which "the Court orders as many of said Books as can be found be brought to the next court."

The following minute records the closing scene of this ludicrous judicial procedure:

"Robert Roman was called to answer the presentment of the Grand Jury the last Court; he appeared and submitted himself to the Bench. The order of the Court is that he shall pay five pounds for a fine and all charges, and never practice the arts, and behave himself well for the future, and

he promised to do so, whereupon he is discharged for this time."[1]

This was the action of the Court. Meantime, the Friends did not suffer the matter to drop. The subject was carried up to the Quarterly Meeting, and a *Testimony* which is believed to be unique, was published by that meeting early in 1696:

"Whereas the meeting being acquainted that some persons under the profession of truth, and belonging to this meeting, who professing the art of Astrology, have undertaken thereby to answer questions and give Astronomical Judgments concerning persons and things, tending to the dishonor of God, and the reproach of Truth and the great hurt of themselves and those who come to inquire of them; and, Whereas, it is also reported that some professing truth among us seems too much inclined to use and practice Rabdomancy, or consulting with a staff, and such like things, all which have brought a weighty exercise and concern upon this meeting, as well because of the reproach, that is already brought upon the truth hereby, as also to prevent, as much as in us lies, its being further reproached by any among us that may attempt to follow the like practices for time to come:

[1]Dr. George Smith. "History of Delaware County." p. 193.

Now, therefore, being met together in the fear of the Lord, to consider not only the affairs of Truth in the General, but also that it may be kept clear of all scandal and reproach by all that profess it in this particular; as also to recover, if possible, any who, for want of diligence and watchfulness therein, have not only brought reproach thereto, but have also hurt their own souls, darkened their understandings, hindered themselves as to their inward exercise and spiritual travel toward the land of rest and peace; which, as we all come in a measure to be possessed of, shall feel great satisfaction and sweet content in our condition, as God by His good hand of Providence shall be pleased to order it. Whether we have much of this world or not; whether we get of it or not; whether we lose or not lose, every one being in his place, using his or her honest and Christian endeavors; we shall be content with the success of our labors without such unlawful looking of what the event of this or that or the other thing may be; by running to inquire of the star-gazers, or monthly prognosticators, which of old could not tell their own events (neither can they at this day). For we read, that when God pronounced His judgments against Babylon and Chaldea, how the prophet in the Zeal of the Lord called

upon such men in a contemptuous manner, saying, 'Evil hath come upon thee, thou shalt not know from where it riseth.' 'And,' said he, 'let now the astrologers and star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.' 'Behold,' said he, 'they shall be as stubble, they shall not deliver themselves,' etc.

"And further, we may read how the Lord strictly commanded His people, saying, 'There shall not be found among you any that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter of familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord.' So that, upon the whole, we do declare against all the aforesaid or any such like practices; and do exhort all, not only to forbear practising any of those things themselves, but also that they discountenance the practice thereof in all those whomsoever it doth appear; and, forasmuch as we understand that those among us that incline to those things are chiefly some youths, who, being unacquainted with the enemy's mysterious workings and devices, whereby he allures their minds to seek and aspire after such knowledge, which, when they have attained all they can, is at best but uncertain and fallable, as they

themselves confess, and, therefore, is but knowledge falsely so called; we do, therefore, in the fear of God, caution, warn, and exhort all parents, who, if at any time they see, or otherwise understand, their children do practice, or are inclined to practice any of those things, that speedily thereupon they use their utmost endeavors, not only like Eli of old, to forewarn them, but also to restrain them. And further, it is the sincere and Christian advice of this meeting that, when any among us have been found acting in any of those things, that Friends of the particular Monthly Meeting where such dwell, do use their utmost endeavors, in the way and order of the Gospel practiced among us, to bring such person or persons to a sense of their wrong practices therein; and that they do, for the clearing of Truth, and also for the good of their own souls, condemn what they have already done as to these things; and that, for time to come, they lay them aside, and practice them no more.

"And also, that they bring in all books that relate to those things to the Monthly Meeting they belong to, to be disposed of as Friends shall think fit; and, if any shall refuse to comply with such their wholesome and Christian advice, that then the Friends of said respective Monthly Meetings

do give testimony against them; and so Truth will stand over them, and Friends will be clear.

"Let this be read in all Monthly Meetings, and all such First-day Meetings where and as often as the Friends of the respective Monthly Meetings do see service for it."[1]

[1]A. Michener. "Retrospect of Early Quakerism." p. 366.

V.

NOT until 1723 is there any notice of proceedings against witchcraft in the records of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Then occurs the following: "It is the sense and judgment of this meeting that if any professing Truth shall apply to such persons as, by color of any art or skill whatever, do or shall pretend knowledge to discover things hiddenly transacted, or tell where things lost or stolen may be found; or if any, under our profession, do or pretend to any such Art or Skill, we do hereby, in just abhorrence of such doings, direct that the offender be speedily dealt with and brought under censure." The wording of the paragraph just quoted occurs also in the Book of Discipline for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1806, when it was ordered that those who pretended to occult knowledge or proceedings, should be "testified against."

The warning of 1723 was sent to New England, and may be found upon the records of Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in the same year. It is not safe, however, to assert that sorcery or witchcraft had come to an end, even among the Quakers, except officially, although the mild forms in which it still survived gave little cause for notice. Solid Pennsylvania Quakers who lived near the limits of Philadelphia,—at that period the most cosmopolitan town on the continent—had no liking for witchcraft or its allied methods, and in their atmosphere of sanity and hard common-sense, the art failed to thrive. But the young Quakers, even of that sober town, still enjoyed an occasional delicious *thrill* from a mysterious tale, even if they did not actually believe its circumstances, and in the absence of novels, a good ghost story was a real boon! Ann Warder, that vivacious and observant English Quakeress, who took up her abode among her husband's American relatives in Philadelphia in 1786, notes in her journal in the autumn of that year, "Next day, dining at Ann Giles', with some Friends, the ladies went from the table, leaving the men to their Pipes, and went upstairs to our chat, in which I readily discovered their great love for talking about Aparitions, Visions, and such strange things;" and she adds several unlikely

stories of no consequence, as illustrations. About the same time, the more intellectual of the younger London Friends were having a great craze over what they called "animal magnetism," and the Frys, Robinsons, Molly Knowles (Dr. Johnson's friend), and others were meeting about at each other's houses to have what might be called "hypnotizing parties," to experiment upon each other.

The more isolated Quakers in the central tracts of what was then the wilderness of Pennsylvania, and particularly those in the neighborhood of the ordinary German settlers, who were proverbially superstitious, continued to cherish the idea in some form or other, but in nothing that rose to the dignity of an official notice. Charms were sold—and Quakers were often the purchasers—to ward off lightnings or disease, dry up streams or the well of an enemy, to reconcile a pair of quarrelsome lovers, or force the cow to give bloody milk. It is probable that the most superstitious among the Quakers in the whole course of their history, not excepting those who were closest to the witchcraft epidemic of Salem, were to be found among the country Quakers who were the least educated, and who dwelt in the neighborhood of the Germans of Pennsylvania. Those in the more southern colony far outnumbered the others, whose tendency would

JOHANN KELPIUS
"Hermit of the Wissahickon."
From an old print.

rather be toward disgust, than any feeling of imitation. The presence also of certain learned scientific men among the various mystical sects that soon followed Penn into his colony, and who were attracted by the liberty of thought there made possible, had more influence upon Pennsylvania than has yet been admitted. There is here a whole field of historical investigation.[1]

The Roscicrucians, and the mystical society of "The Woman in the Wilderness," on the banks of the Wissahickon, through their leader, Koster, were in sympathy with the followers of George Keith, and opposed to the Orthodox Quakers. Kelpius and Zimmerman, their astronomers, were mediæval scholars who combined astronomy and theology after a system even then antiquated. How easy it was, in the nightly vigils in the old observatory of their "Tabernacle," to calculate a horoscope along with an eclipse, or to observe the celestial phenomena with an eye to the future of a newborn infant! There is no doubt that in the chemical laboratories below, their brethren "labored to discover the Elixir Vitæ, and the Lapis Philosophorum. On the walls hung the divining-rod by

[1]The works of Pennypacker, Sachse, Diffenderfer, Brumbaugh and others touch very inadequately upon the relation of these German immigrants to the Quaker settlements.

which might be discovered precious metals, and subterranean springs."[1]

To these scientific astrologers—for they were nothing more or less—resorted certain highly respected English Quakers, who, cut off from the study of the fine arts, theology, and the more liberal branches of learning, allowed their minds free course in those scientific studies toward which the early Pennsylvania Quaker seems naturally to have tended—for this very reason. A slight admixture of sorcery no doubt seemed to their minds far less dangerous than a study of literature, music or the classics; indeed, was probably regarded as a part of all science. Among the most frequent of these visitors was the Quaker astronomer, Daniel Leeds, who, for some years before the arrival of Kelpius, and his co-religionists, had published an "ALLmanack." The earliest specimens of this curious publication are preserved in the rooms of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. In his edition of 1694, Leeds naively apologizes thus for his prognostications of the weather, disarming all criticism by saying: 'As to what I have spoken of the Weather is in general, and respects all Kingdoms and Courts (for no otherways can we well do). Therefore, if it happen not to be such Weather in this particu-

[1]Dr. Sachse. "The Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania." p. 85.

A N

ALMANACK

For the Year of Christian Account

1694.

And from the Creation of the World

5661.

But by *Keplas* Computation 5687.

Being the second after Leap-Year,
The Epact is 14. Golden Number 4.
and Dominical Letter *G*.

Containing Matters Necessary and Useful, chiefly accomodated to the Lat. of 40 Degrees, but may without sensible Error serve the Places adjacent, from *Newfound-Land* to the Capes of *Virginia*.

By *Daniel Leeds*, Philomat.

A Motto. taught by the Sons of *Urania*.

If to be born under Mercury *disposeth us to be Witty, and under* Jupiter *to be Wealthy, we do not owe Thanks unto them, but unto that Merciful Hand that ordered our indifferent & uncertain Nativities unto such benevolent Aspects.*

Printed and Sold by *William Bradford* at the Bible in *New-York*, 1694.

Title page of Daniel Leeds' Almanac for 1694.
Original owned by Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

lar of Ground, and yet be such in General, I hope you will not blame me for being so universally minded.'" Leeds, a prominent Quaker colonist in the early days, quarrelled with Friends in 1688 about his almanac, and left the society. He had all along been a sympathizer with Keith, and joined that leader when his controversy became conspicuous. The theosophical and occult philosophy that found expression in this almanac was doubtless a direct result of his intercourse with the German mystics of the Wissahickon, and the cause that led to his expulsion from the Quakers who were Orthodox. Among these was his opponent, Francis Daniel Pastorius, who, although a German immigrant himself, had no sympathy with the mystics or Roscicrucians. His name is to be found frequently upon the books of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, although he was never an actual member, and was buried after the rites of his early faith.

The case of the Rev. Joseph Morgan, of the "Old Scots" Church at Freehold, New Jersey, about the same time, is interesting in this connection. The neighborhood was that from which George Keith came, and while there is no evidence of any relations between the two, they were both of that type of unusually scientific and well educated men, whose investigations tended, like the Germantown

philosophers, to surprise and confound their unlearned neighbors, who had no other explanation for the products of scientific discovery than that they were aided by the Evil One himself. Mr. Morgan was of an inventive turn of mind, which, in the early days of his ministry, caused a charge against him of astrological practices. This was renewed when (1712-1714) he produced a sort of prophecy of the steamboat, as a result of his interest in the study of navigation. He was born in Connecticut, in 1674, and confessed to Cotton Mather, "I have no leisure for reading or writing discourses for the church, and often know not my text before the Sabbath." To the Puritans at this period, extempore speaking was in itself heretical. The Philadelphia Synod, in dismissing Mr. Morgan, who sympathized with Jonathan Dickinson in dissent from the supremacy of that body, said, "We cannot find Mr. Morgan clear from imprudence and misconduct in making the two alleged experiments of that kind, if the reports be true, were his ends never so good and laudable!" What the "two alleged experiments" were, we are unfortunately not informed.

The irrepressible Benjamin Franklin made use of the still-existent witchcraft idea to mystify his readers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in the issue

II Month, *Zif*, Dripping *April.*

And dripping, more or leſs, it does remain,
E'er ſince (to cauſe *Noah*'s Flood) it firſt did rain.
Before which time the Earth (ſo *Moſes* ſays)
Was watered by a Miſt, no other ways:
The Rain-bow alſo proves it unto me,
For withour Clouds no Rain-bow could there be.

1	☌	Palm Branches.	♏	1	36	Sun riſe at 5 29	
2	2	Day 13 h. 4 min.	♏	2	21	Sets at 6 31	
3	3	☌☌♀ fine *growing*	♐	3	08		
4	4	weather. ☽ a little	♐	3	54		
5	5	eaſtward of ♄.	♑	4	40		
6	6	One ill weed marrs a	♑	5	26		
7	7	*whol* pot of pottage.	♒	6	11	Laſt Quarter	
8	☌	EASTER-Day.	♒	6	57	the 6 day.	
9	2	Day 13 h. 30 min.	♓	7	42		
10	3	If not windy, then	♈	8	27		
11	4	□ ♂ ☉ warm and	♈	9	12		
12	5	△ ♄ ☉ ſomthing *dry*	♈	9	58	Sun riſe at 5 18	
13	6	but propable now	♈	10	43	Sets at 6 42	
14	7	□ ♆ ♀ *begins* to rain	♉	11	28		
15	☽	to propagate the	♉	12	14	New ☽ the 15	
16	2	Spring. ☞ Law	♊	1	02	day at 5 morn.	
17	3	& Phyſick undoes	♊	1	50		
18	4	*many* a man.	♊	2	38		
19	5	Day 13 h. 3 quar.	♋	3	26		
20	6	☌☉♀ After Rain	♋	4	14		
21	7	it will be fair again	♌	5	03	Sun riſe at 5 7	
22	☽	☽ draws near cor ♌	♌	5	53	Sets at 6 53	
23	2	Probable more wet	♌	6	43		
24	3	laſt Month than this	♍	7	33	Firſt Quar. 22	
25	4	*St. Mark.* □ ♂ ♀	♍	8	23	day	
26	5	Heat breeds *Thunder*	♎	9	13		
27	6	*Salem* Meeting.	♎	10	03		
28	7	Day 14 hours.	♏	10	53		
29	☌	A time of pleaſant	♏	11	43	Full ☽ 29 day	
30	2	⚹ ☉ ♆ fair weather	♐	12	33	at 5 morn.	

Specimen page of Daniel Leeds' Almanac for 1694.
Original owned by Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

of October 22, 1730, by writing an account of a supposed witchcraft trial near Mount Holly, New Jersey—an account which has been solemnly quoted by various subsequent historians. In Franklin's usual plausible fashion was described the trial of a man and a woman accused of making sheep dance, hogs sing or speak, etc. The accused, in the presence of the Governor, were weighed against the Bible, "and their lumps of mortality were severally too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles!" This not being satisfactory, trial by water was resorted to. When the accused swam, there was a diversity of opinion, the accused themselves wondering why they did not sink! This account was received in London with solemnity, and published in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* for January, 1731 (Vol. I, 29), while Dr. Franklin was all the time laughing in his sleeve at the success of his joke. This picturesque incident is elsewhere described as occurring about "skie-setting." Franklin purposely placed the affair in the heart of a thickly settled Quaker community.[1]

The same Quakers at Burlington had had in circulation among themselves the following petition, which was by no means an unusual thing. This

[1]The text of this squib is quoted in full in the edition of the "Life and Works" of Benjamin Franklin by Albert H. Smyth. Vol. II, 170.

copy is made from the original paper, which is known to be of an earlier date than 1730:

"Please your Worships, gentlemen. Pray doe have some Charety for me, a poor Distrest man that is become old and scars able to Mentain my Famely at the best, and now sum Peopel has raised a Reporte that my Wife is a Witch, by which I and my famely must sartinly suffer if she cant be clear'd of the thing and a Stop Poot to the Reporte for Peopel will not have no Delings with me on the acount Pray Gentlemen I beg the favor of you that one or more of you would free her for she is Desirous that she may be tried by all Maner of Ways that ever a Woman was tried so that she can get Cleare of the Report from your poor and Humble Servant, Jeames Moore."

At the same town, there is still standing the "witch tree," which may have been that referred to in London[1]: "A tree observed at Burlington, in New Jersey, which had been split and the parts rejoined, was believed to have been used for the purpose of curing disease. This was done by passing the person afflicted (usually a child) through the cleft, whereby the disease was lost in transmission, departing with the renewed growth of the

[1]Notes and Queries. London. 6th series. Vol. I, p. 10.

tree. It was necessary that the child's body touch the inner surface to transfer the disease direct."

White, in his "Natural History of Selborne," describes minutely the removal of several such trees from his own garden, in 1776. The idea of human life bound up in that of a tree will occur to every one who has seen the Caernarvon Yew. That the horned cattle uttered prayers upon their knees at midnight on Christmas Eve, was believed very generally so late as 1850. The churn was often said to be "bewitched" when the butter would not "come," and many an one would

> "Chase evil spirits away by dint
> Of sickle, horse-shoe, hollow flint."[1]

To the present day, many good Friends have their little pet superstitions. I have myself been besought by a Friend of long Quaker lineage not to move into a new house on "Sixth-day" (Friday). The same good lady carried a horse-chestnut in her pocket for years, to cure her rheumatism. In the early eighteenth century, there was a great prejudice against beginning any transaction on Friday. A Friend of Wilmington, Delaware, intending to build a brig, determined to combat the superstition by entering into all his contracts on that day, which he did, even naming his vessel the *"Friday."* They

[1]Hudibras. II Canto, III.

began to load her on that day, although the sailors had to be bribed from that time until they set sail. On that unlucky day, a week later "in the midst of a most awful gale, the crew of a homeward-bound vessel saw this brig, with her men cutting away the masts." "From that hour, neither brig nor crew was ever heard of, and as there was no insurance, there was great loss." The wife had opposed the design of her husband from the first, and when the loss of the brig was certain, she walked the floor in despair, saying, "Isaac, this is all thy *Sixth-day's doing.* I warned thee of the consequences!"[1]

The early objection of Quakerism to the use of the "Heathen" days of the month and week is well known. Yet the *Moral Almanac,* an ancient and much respected official publication of Philadelphia Quakerism, uses to-day the old astrological signs for the aspect and names of the heavenly bodies, and prefers the Dominical letter of the Roman Church to the numeral, to signify the first day of the week.

An old writer on witchcraft says that a person meeting with a mischance will do well to consider whether he put not on his shirt wrong side outwards, or his left shoe on his right foot. The

[1] *The Era* for May, 1901.

petticoat was usually demanded first of any victim of sorcery, this garment seeming to possess great efficacy. The good old Chester County Quaker farmer to-day has a horse-shoe nailed to his barn door, although he could not tell exactly why, and plants his crops according to the condition of the moon, with rather more certainty in his own mind that this custom, at least, must have some scientific foundation! Within the past two years I have known a Friend in New Jersey who used the services of a neighbor and her staff to locate the position of a future well.

Women were reckoned the chief witches in the early days, because to them the practice of domestic medicine was principally confined. The "wise woman," understanding the use of herbs and a simple sort of botany, having more insight and more brains than her ignorant neighbors, wrought what seemed miracles to them, by simple means, to-day well understood. Witchcraft, as we understand it, was unknown in England before the twelfth century. "Women," said the old Puritans, "were created for the trial and temptation of man!"

Bishop Grandisson's Register for 1348 mentions many complaints against one Margery Kytel, who "exercised magic arts and was a witch." She refused to appear when he cited her, and he there-

fore pronounced against her, from the parish pulpit, the Major Excommunication.[1]

The Commissary who examined Joan of Arc, said to her, "Did your godmother, who saw the fairies, pass as a Wise Woman?" Joan answered, "She was held and considered a good and honest woman, neither divineress nor sorceress."[2] In 1599, James the First's "Dæmonology" has the following dialogue between Philomathes and Epistemon:

Phi. "What can be the cause that there are twentie women given to that craft" (*ie.*, sorcery) "where there is one man?"

Epis. "The reason is easie, for as that sexe is frailer than man is, so is it easier to be entrapped in those grosse snares of the divell as was overwel proved to be trew by the serpent's deceiving of Eva at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sexe sensine!"[3]

Little superstitions connected with the practice of medicine among the people were often employed without the smallest notion of their origin. Van Helmont's system of medicine was a book familiar to the educated Quakers, the author only having

[1]F. A. Gasquet. "Parish Life in Mediæval England," p. 230.

[2]T. Douglass Murray. "Jeanne d'Arc, Maid of Orleans," etc., p. 87.

[3]R. S. Rait. "A Royal Rhetorician." XXIII.

died in 1664. Indeed, so impressed was George Fox himself with the value of medicine, that he seriously thought, when a young man, of taking up the profession. He tells us "the virtues of the creatures were also opened to me, so that I began to deliberate whether I should practice physic for the good of mankind."

VI.

QUITE the most striking connection of mediæval thought with the Quakerism of to-day, however, is to be found in the recent Life of Whittier, by Colonel T. W. Higginson.[1] It is important that attention should be drawn to a misstatement which unintentionally does gross injustice to a woman of quite another temperament. We are told that in speaking of the poet Rosetti and his extraordinary ballad of "Sister Helen," Whittier confessed himself strongly attracted to it because he could remember seeing his mother, "who was as good a woman as ever breathed," with his aunt, performing the strange act on which the ballad turns, and melting the waxen figure of a clergyman of their time, that its soul might go to its doom in Hell! Colonel Higginson says, "The solemnity of the af-

[1] T. W. Higginson. "John Greenleaf Whittier." English Men of Letters Series.

fair made a deep impression on Whittier's mind as a child, for the death of the clergyman in question was confidently expected. His 'heresies' had led him to experience this cabalistic treatment."

The aim of the mystic ceremony was to destroy the soul of the person (usually a passing invalid), and it seems almost incredible that any sight or memory of human suffering should have called forth such a spirit of revenge in those seemingly gentle natures. Whittier's mother was "a beautiful and godly woman, full of a saintly peace and an overflowing human kindness which made her a very type of her religion," and the performance of even such vicarious cruelty as is here described would seem a moral impossibility. If the scene were true, we should have, in a New England Quaker family, less than one hundred years ago, a scene worthy of the middle ages. Colonel Higginson is quoting from Mrs. Fields.[1] But no reference is made to the incident in the latest and ablest biography of the Quaker poet, whose author[2] writes in a private letter, "Mrs. Fields' statement on page 52 of her little book entitled "Whittier," with reference to the strangely superstitious practice of Whittier's mother and aunt, is in all probability

[1]Mrs. James T. Fields. "Whittier." p. 52.

[2]Professor George R. Carpenter. "John Greenleaf Whittier." American Men of Letters Series.

based upon Mrs. Fields' faulty memory. I talked about the matter both with Mr. Pickard, who married Whittier's niece, and with Whittier's three cousins at Oak Knoll, one of whom is a woman of seventy or so, and knew Whittier's mother and aunt. Both Mr. Pickard and the cousins feel perfectly sure that it is a mistake."

No one who has read the close of Rosetti's song can ever forget it:

"See, see the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the waves are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little Brother,
(O, Mother, Mary, Mother),
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven."

"Ah! What is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little Brother!"
(O, Mother, Mary, Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost between Hell and Heaven!)

Whittier's poetic imagination bore testimony to his inheritance of an emotional sensitiveness which training and experience developed into the greatest gift to the human mind—that of the poet. It is quite possible that this mother may have explained to her son, as a child, the practices indulged in by some of the dwellers in that neighborhood in the sterner Puritan days, when we know that such things were far from uncommon. The impression would naturally be strong on a sensitive nature. Whittier seems to have been able to enter very fully into the feeling of the days of superstition in New England, as the tinge of a mysterious spell or incantation is over more than one of his poems, and there is much in the sympathy and understanding with which he wrote, "The Witch's Daughter, or Mabel Martin," first published in *The National Era,* in 1857. His "Spiritualism in New England" is another evidence.

For our ancestors, dreams, hallucinations, revelations and all sorts of incredible experiences, were inextricably mixed up with facts. "Impressions" to-day have a scientific explanation. The old Quaker historian, Sewel,[1] tells us that in 1702, Galenius Abrahams asserted that "nobody" at that day "could be accepted as a messenger of God un-

[1]Sewel's "History of the Quakers." Vol. II, 366, 368.

less he confirmed his doctrine by miracles." Hence, with the early Friends, visions and apparitions by night form a large element in the convincement and experience of many of them. Beginning with Fox and continuing with Story, Bownas, Hoag, Savery, Woolman, Hunt, Grellet, there is a really extraordinary list of these relations. At the time of their occurrence they were devoutly believed by the subject to be of divine origin. Perhaps it will not do even yet to relegate them to the pathological position where, doubtless, most of them belong, for it is matter of history that they accomplished a notable object in the impressions made upon the minds of the people. Some of them were of a prophetic character, while others were subjective, like one of Woolman. He is careful to tell us that he was not ill at the time. "Thirteenth fifth month, 1757. Being in good health and abroad with Friends visiting families, I lodged at a Friend's house in Burlington. Going to bed about the usual time with me, I awoke in the night, and my meditations, as I lay, were on the goodness and mercy of the Lord, in a sense whereof my heart was contrited. After this I went to sleep again; in a short time I awoke; it was yet dark and no appearance of day or moonshine; and as I opened my eyes I saw a light in my chamber, at the distance of five feet, about nine

inches in diameter, of a clear easy brightness, and near its centre the most radiant. As I lay still, looking upon it without any suprise, words were spoken to my inward ear which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effect of thought, nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy One spoken in my mind. The words were *Certain Evidence of Divine Truth.* They were again repeated exactly in the same manner, and then the light disappeared."[1]

In many respects, this vision and its narration are the most remarkable in the long list. It possesses a different quality from any of those even of Fox; and while there is an earthly or physical touch in the dreams of nearly all the others, this of John Woolman would seem to belong upon the same plane with some of the visions of the saints in the Church of Rome, and is another point of resemblance between Woolman and St. Francis of Assisi.

There are interesting accounts of Eli Yarnall, a Quaker, who lived in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, and who, as a child, had what was called the gift of "second sight," being able to tell the location of things that were lost, to see the approach of one yet a long way off, and in various ways to possess occult powers. The gift did not remain

[1]The Journal of John Woolman. p. 98.

with him in after years, but his youthful services were in great and awe-struck demand. His mother did not permit him to "divine for money," lest he should thereby lose the gift which she deemed heaven-derived. The idea was not new, even among the Friends, for John Woolman speaks of a case of a rare gift of healing lost by taking a reward.[1]

No real survival of the witchcraft idea can be found among the Quakers to-day. The students of folk-lore, upon whose domain we have trespassed, will tell us of recent grave crimes among the central Pennsylvania Germans, due to lingering superstition. But we must study the Quaker in his environment to understand him properly, and must give him infinite credit for maintaining his sturdy common-sense during periods when all the rest of the world seemed to have taken leave of its senses. No Quaker has ever been known to write a treatise in favor of witchcraft, although there are a few against it. A Yorkshire Quaker[2]

[1]See Watson's "Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania." Vol. I, p. 273. I. Woodbridge Riley, in "The Founder of Mormonism" (p. 187) describes the "seeing stone" used by Joseph Smith the younger, in 1825. It was "a green stone, with brown irregular spots in it. It was a little larger than a goose's egg, and about the same thickness." It was covered with a hat when in use.

[2]Richard Farnsworth, of Balby, Yorkshire, 1655, the "witchcraft year."

wrote with the following as the title to his book, "Witchcraft Cast Out From the Religious Seed and Israel of God, and the Black Art, or Necromancy, Inchantments, Sorcerers, Wizards, Lying Divination, Conjuration and Witchcraft, Discovered," etc. "Written in Warwickshire the ninth month 1654, as a Judgment upon Witchcraft and a denial, testimony and declaration against Witchcraft, from those that the world reproachfully called Quakers."

Indeed, if the direct power of the Devil was to be allowed in cases of witchcraft, as by church and state it was, because Scripture assurance could be quoted that it once existed, why could not the Quaker have been permitted his beautiful faith in the immanence of that divine Spirit, belief in which is the main strength of his creed? It was a strange inconsistency of the human race that two hundred years ago gave immunity from punishment to those who exalted the reign of the Devil, and persecuted the only people that preached a message of earthly, as well as heavenly, peace.

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